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Date: 09/03/2024
Subject: ERA24LA399 - Instructor Statement
Contact: Matthew Case - Instructor

The following is an excerpt from an email sent from Matthew Case to the CAE Director of Safety, Kristina Irving:

Kristina,

Below is my statement for the incident that happened on 23 Aug 2024.

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During a standard straight ahead autorotation to the ground; the SP executed a solid state auto initiated at 1,000' AGL and IP called continue at 200' AGL, determined by good autorotation parameters being met. Rotor was at 103%, Airspeed was 65 knots, pedals were in trim, and lane alignment and termination point were good.

SP initiated the flare at ~80' with a good nose up pitch to bleed airspeed without any aggressive rotor buildup. Pitch was approximately 12-15 degrees high. As the flare effectiveness diminished and we began to sink, the SP reached initial height, approximately 10-15', and gave increased the collective with slight nose forward to level for landing. The cushion to the ground was soft with no bounce or lateral movement/drift. Touchdown speed was approximately 20-25 knots. We began sliding down the runaway with no indication of anything abnormal.

As we approached the final few knots of airspeed during the slide, the aircraft suddenly began to bounce laterally and the nose started to go left. IP put in right pedal to prevent more nose left while the aircraft continued to increase in severity of lateral shaking. The shaking was violent enough to throw the SP's headset off his head and one of the four seatbelt restraints came out from the hub unit.

Upon stopping, and ensuring all crew were ok, IP gave controls to SP and did a walk around of the aircraft. Damage was noted at the lower tail boom attachment bolt on the copilot side with a bend/wrinkle and broken paint at the doublers and also to the upper tail boom attachment bolt on the pilot side with a bend/wrinkle to the doublers.

Once damage was noted, IP elected to shutdown the aircraft on the runway and report the incident.

After shutdown, communication was made with airfield ops and CAE to get a NOTAM in place as well as recovery teams going. further damage was noted to the wire antennas on top of the vertical stabilizer as well as the wire fraying to the tail boom dampener weight. Additionally, oil was noted leaking from the 90 degree gear box at the tail rotor.

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